

MARRIAGE AMONG /KUNG BUSHMEN

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The /Kung extend the incest taboo to certain categories of persons outside the nuclear family because they hold that the relationships resemble the relationships of the nuclear family and that it would therefore be incestuous to unite them in marriage. A man will say explicitly that he must not marry this or that woman because it would be 'like' marrying his mother, daughter, or sister. 582 835

The sexual constraints required between persons to whom the immediate or the extended incest taboo applies find expression in the marriage regulations and, in a secondary way, I believe, in certain avoidances which express constraint, namely: 602 835
(1) Sexual joking and sexual insults, which are permitted between persons who have the joking relationship and must be avoided by others. (2) A sitting taboo. The same persons who must avoid sexual joking must also avoid sitting close to each other or to each other's family fires—with two exceptions, namely: (a) parents and offspring, who must never make sexual jokes but who do not at any age observe the sitting taboo; and (b) all young children, including siblings. The /Kung believe that the persons who must observe the sitting taboo should not allow their genital organs to touch the same spot. No great distance need separate these persons when they sit. About 18 inches is a minimum but is sufficient. The taboo is applied without sex differentiation: men must not sit near men or women, or women near women or men if they do not have the joking relationship. (3) With the exception of siblings of any age, the same persons who avoid joking avoid using each other's names in direct address. They use a kin term instead or the men may use a respect term for each other—*/nau*, 'old man'. (4) Brothers and sisters do not sit near each other when they reach adolescence and, after marriage, when they have dwelling-places of their own, do not enter each other's schirms (shelters). (5) Parents and SoWi and DaHu, in addition to observing the joking, sitting, and name avoidances, do not enter each other's schirms and do not speak to each other in the first few years of their affinal relationship. They are the only persons in /Kung society who must avoid speaking together. After three children have been born, this avoidance is eased somewhat. In-laws may then speak occasionally; once in two or three days would be considered permissible. This interesting avoidance, so varied in intensity and so widely spread in human societies, appears in /Kung society to afford whatever benefits it has without imposing great hardship at any time. A daughter-in-law may lean her schirm upon her husband's parents' schirm and build her fire only about four or five feet away, and what she wants to say to her parents-in-law she says aloud to her husband or child and her parents-in-law overhear and respond in like manner. A son-in-law also could communicate in this way. I think only a /Kung or an informed observer would know that the in-laws were not speaking directly to each other. 593 606

The symbolism or expression of sexual constraint which underlies the joking and sitting avoidances is also observable in the modesty of these people. I believe that their modesty is not obedience to a specific taboo, like the sitting taboo, but is a more general response to being constantly in the presence of persons to whom the incest taboo applies, before whom any expression of sex would be improper. The general demeanour of the /Kung is modest. The dancing, if it gives any expression at all to sexuality or eroticism, conveys it with such restraint and delicacy as to be in extreme contrast to the dancing of the neighbouring Bantu tribes. Both men and women among the /Kung are exceedingly modest about exposing their genital 834 [831]

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inside the scherm, he outside. Apparently no social rules pattern their sleeping. Individual adjustments are made.

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The boys must before they marry have proved themselves to be hunters and must have had performed over them the most important ceremony in the life of a /Kung boy—the Ceremony of the First Killing. The killing of birds or small animals does not qualify him for the ceremony; the animal he kills must be one of the great antelopes or a giraffe or buffalo, any one of the large animals killed for meat. When the boy himself has killed one of these, he is ceremonially scarified by his father or by another kinsman if his father is dead. The ceremony is performed twice for each boy. For the first male animal he is scarified on his right side and for the first female on his left side. Charred meat and fat, turned to magic by the ceremony, are rubbed into the several lines of vertical cuts on his face, arms, back, and chest to give him the will to hunt, good sight, and accurate aim; also to enable him to find the animal and to protect him from being seen by the animal. The ceremony is both a solemn celebration and a magic force to increase and strengthen the boy's power to hunt. It also carries with it the right to marriage and attests the boy's readiness.

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Marriage does not necessarily follow immediately upon this ceremony; years may elapse, but the way is prepared and readiness is proved. And once more the act of hunting is ceremonially linked with marriage. At the time of the wedding, the boy must bring to his bride's parents an animal that he himself has killed. The animal he brings must not be eaten by the bride.

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A boy who never killed any large meat animal would not be given a wife, informants said. This was why the strange old deviant, /Gaishay, had remained a bachelor. For reasons no one understood he could not hunt; he gathered veldkos like a woman. Gossip had it that twice he had tried to drag a woman against her will into his scherm but had not succeeded. Informants remarked, 'Women like meat.' They do, but there is far more to it than that.

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As John Marshall shows in his film, *The Hunters*, the primary sources of physical life, sex and food, are involved. In /Kung concept they are linked together, and, as they pertain to men, their duality is lifted to oneness in the being of the man, who is the sexually powerful male and the provider, the hunter. Power as a man and a male and worthiness and dignity are associated with hunting and not with the failure to hunt.

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Since they are related, both the sexual and the hunting powers of the young man can be captured at once with a bride. For the first several years of marriage the boy goes to live with his bride's parents, or her people, should her parents be dead, to hunt for them. The parents of girls speak constantly of wanting their sons-in-law to provide them with food as though it were an obsession. 'We are old', they say, or 'We shall soon be old [whether this is actually true or not]; we need a young man to hunt for us'; 'our daughter's husband must get us something to eat'; 'we need karosses'; 'we want meat'—these are their refrains.

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Another value the /Kung place upon the boy's hunting during his bride-service appears in their belief that if the husband hunts for his wife and feeds her while she is still a growing child she becomes the more his. Food seems to be a main concern in bride-service, but the people also say that they want to be sure that the boy measures up in every way and will take good care of their daughter, and that the girl will have time to get used to her husband.

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584 The betrothal, which takes place immediately before the couple move into the man's pontok, is regarded as concluded when the man seizes the girl's wrist, as can be seen in Photograph 44. Since, however, "betrothal" and "marriage" are separated only by the walk to the hut, the seizing of the bride's forearm may be regarded as concluding the marriage.

The seizing of the forearm is a fairly violent gesture, and on the way to the hut the bride allows herself in a certain sense to be dragged along. Could it be that this perhaps represents a vestige of an earlier custom of abducting the woman?

606 It is curious how the relationship of the son-in-law to his mother-in-law changes after the marriage. The former avoids the company of his mother-in-law and does not sit down with her. If, for instance, he approaches the campfire with the obvious intention of sitting down in front of it, the mother-in-law will go away. If he is absolutely forced to discuss something with her, they yell at each other from a great distance.

836 Premarital sexual intercourse scarcely seems to occur.

163 I noted that most women had two or three children who were about two to three years apart (see p. 5).

591 The woman goes to the family or settlement of her husband, not the other way around. The fact that the young couple stays for some time in the settlement of the wife's parents, roughly until the first child is born, may have given rise to error. Later on, the couple always returns to the man's horde.

582 A man may not marry his own sister and likewise, naturally, neither his mother nor daughter. Other degrees of relationship constitute no absolute obstacle to marriage.

As a rule, however, one does not marry within his own family and, if possible, not even within his own horde. Preferably women are brought in from far away, often from groups speaking another language (Naroon, Genkuin, Hei-um [Heikum]).

851 The birth of a child does not necessitate a temporary separation of the marriage partners.

684 Marital fidelity seems to be observed to a fair extent. The adulterer is killed, and the wife is treated according to the temperament of the deceived husband, that is, she is given a more or less violent beating.

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881 old people are seated. The young man may not eat any of the meat; he may only drink the soup, which is also rubbed on him. From now on he is regarded as an adult, a marriageable man; 582 his parents ask him whether he wants to be married. The boy 584 commonly replies: "I am still weak and do not know whether I can take good care of her." Then the parents allow him to wait until he himself wants to marry. Von Zastrow and Vedder (p. 415) report the following concerning the boys' initiation:

[31] "On this occasion the boys are told how they must 881 conduct themselves when they go out to seek a wife, and how they [867] must behave towards a mother-in-law. To sit down by an evening [584] fire next to an adult girl is tantamount to a marriage proposal, even if not a word is spoken. Under no circumstances may one [606] look at the mother-in-law. They also practice animal dances in the bush, the kind that are performed by the men later at joyous celebrations, and also in times of distress. Finally, the young [304] Bushman receives the tribal marking, a number of skin incisions on the cheek below the temple. Each tribe has a certain number of skin incisions. In order to make them stand out clearly even [386] after healing, pulverized charcoal is put into the incisions. As a result, the tribal marking later looks like a black streak on the yellow skin.

224 "There is nothing against applying another mark on the 304 future huntsman during this celebration, namely, the hunting 881 inoculation. This must be done by a man who has special powers and knowledge at his disposal. In order to sharpen the future hunter's eye for game generally and certain game in particular, it is necessary to make a deep incision between the eyes over the root of the nose, into which the practiced hand of the surgeon sprinkles a powder of dried and pulverized parts of all kinds of game.

"The inoculation may later be repeated several times if the hunter has no luck in hunting.

881 "A person who has received the tribal marking is now re- 884 garded as a Bush 'man'; he can make his own bow and arrows, like those of the old people, and go hunting with them. Also, the way is now open for him to found a family."

582 It practically never happens that a Bushman remains

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500 the beyond one acts the same as on this earth. Like the Namib
769 Bushmen, they throw little stones on the graves and at the same
time pray that the spirit of the deceased may bring them luck
(Dornan, op. cit., p. 146).

787 Conceptions concerning dreams are tied in with the Lulu
(774) doctrine of conscience. In a dream the other self speaks with the
dreamer, and this may be good or bad. The other self may be in-
fluenced by enemies and thus do harm to the twin soul.

According to Dornan, the Bantu adopted the oracle sticks
from the Bushmen. Every Masarwa carries four or five pieces
with him. The female pieces are longer and narrower than the
(825) male pieces. They are made from the hoofs of small mammals,
(824) from wildebeest bones, and fruit kernels. The names of the four
sticks are: Chowe, Kao, Daua, Gaichwe. The Masarwa believe
(776) that [65] Thora and Huwe, and perhaps also Khauma, speak
through these bones, and Mackenzie (1) states that the Bushmen

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1. Ten Years North of the Orange River,
p. 136.

had designated these bones as morimo aa'me (things of God).

The shoulderblade of the springbok is also used for divination by the Masarwa.

666 Among the Masarwa the mother-in-law may not look at
551 her son-in-law and may not mention his name. The wife may say
602 neither the name of her husband nor the names of his relatives.

Finally, concerning the Swamp Bushmen of the Okovonggo
105 delta, J. Seiner reports:
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"The Tannekwe have summer and winter villages, as well
as boats and goats, and engage in agriculture, fishing, and hunting.
(563) The latter occupations are practiced by the pure Bushmen, whereas
half-breeds and the pure Mambukuschu, who were stolen as chil-
dren and reared by the Bushmen, occupy themselves with agricul-
ture and subordinate tasks.

"The number of racially pure Bushmen among the Tannekwe
(144) may be as high as 60 per cent, but as a result of the slight increase
of true Bushmen, which they try to equalize by stealing the
Mambukuschu children, they are undergoing a steady decrease,
AND RACIAL MIXTURE IS PROGRESSING RAPIDLY.

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[72 cont.] THE SUITOR

584 brings his future parents-in-law presents in the form of game and
(583) veldkost, sometimes for more than a year. If matters go smoothly,
(585) he takes the girl to his hut after a while, and the marriage is re-
garded as concluded. If, in spite of her parents' consent, the girl
refuses to marry the man (she is entitled to state her wishes and by
no means always follows her parents' desires), the young man
finally takes the girl forcibly into his hut. Should a man do vio-
684 lence to a girl without the consent of her parents, he would be

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Fig. 26. Nagau Girl in Festive
Finery of Ostrich Egg Beads
(Girls' Initiation).

585 killed. There are no special ceremonies when the marriage is
concluded. The engagement, undertaken before the couple
settles in the man's pontok, is regarded as concluded when the
man seizes the girl around her wrist. Since, however, the "en-
gagement" and "wedding" are separated in time only by the walk
to the hut, the grasping of the bride's lower arm may be regarded
as concluding the marriage. [Fig. 26 appears here.] The seizing
of the lower arm is done rather violently, and on the walk to the
hut the bride allows herself to be dragged along to a certain extent.
606 It is curious to note how the relationship of the son-in-law to his
mother-in-law changes after the marriage. The former avoids
his mother-in-law's company and does not sit with her. For ex-
ample, when he approaches the campfire with the obvious inten-
tion of sitting down in front of it, the mother-in-law goes away.
If it is absolutely necessary for him to discuss something with her,
they yell at each other from a great distance.

836 Premarital sexual intercourse scarcely seems to occur.

163 Kaufmann observed that most of the women had two or three

Exchange of wives

is practised among some of the Kulahari groups but not by the *Hei-//om*. 184
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Among the *Hei-//om* a young man eligible for marriage is known as a *'gari-khoib*. When he desires to marry he first speaks about the matter to his best friend (*//hosab*) who then approaches the parents of the prospective bride. The latter will reply, "We are poor, we cannot afford to give our daughter away." Thereupon the *//hosab* returns to the suitor and tells him to go and speak to the mother himself. The suitor then proceeds to the *//gāus* of the girl's mother, taking his bow and arrows with him. On arrival at her hut he sits down some distance away and says, "I want your daughter." The mother replies, "We are too poor to give our daughter away," to which the suitor responds, "I have come myself to speak to you. If you die, I will bury you, if your husband dies I will bury him," thereby implying that he has become one of the family and prepared to share their sorrows and sufferings. The mother then replies, "You are right, you may take her. I will do as you say and whether you will carry out your promises," and taking his bow and arrows, proceeds to her daughter's hut (*'gari-khois oms*) and places them in the hut. Then, without speaking to her daughter, she returns to her own hut. The daughter knows to whom the bow and arrows belong. The suitor goes to the girl's hut towards dusk but does not speak to her. Being still shy and afraid of men, she may run away but does not go to her mother's hut as she is afraid of being punished. He remains in the *'gari-khois oms*, sleeping in it at night and hunting during the day. If, after two or three days, she does not come back he returns to his *//gāus* and, after obtaining some beadwork from his mother and sister, presents it to his mother-in-law through his sister. He returns to his bride's hut in the meantime. The mother-in-law must accept the present (*//ama-xun*) as the marriage was completed when she took his bow and arrows and placed them in her daughter's hut. Towards midnight the mother takes her daughter to the *'gari-khois oms* and, if necessary, removes her there by force. The bride and bridegroom do not speak to each other nor, under normal circumstances, are the presents sent to her mother by the bridegroom until they have slept together. After the marriage has been consummated the husband goes out hunting to obtain meat for the *'gu-#a-#nab* or the dance after an animal was killed for the purpose of making a wife's leather skirt. The young couple continue to live in the *'gari-khois oms* for some months before taking up residence with the husband's group. On arrival in his own *//gāus* his mother builds a hut for them. 584
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Parent-in-law taboo is met with among all the tribes. The son-in-law neither looks at nor speaks to his mother-in-law, nor will he mention her name or enter her hut even in case of sickness or during her absence. When, in the absence of 606

606 his mother-law, it is necessary to speak to anybody in her hut, he will keep at a distance and depart as soon as he sees her approaching. They never refer to each other by name but always as "my son-in-law" or "my mother-in-law." The son-in-law does not associate with his father-in-law but similarly avoids him and should they meet accidentally they may exchange greetings but no general conversation will take place nor will they look each other in the face.

847 Abortion is sometimes practised early in pregnancy in the case of both married and unmarried women. It is procured by external manipulation of the uterus and not through the agency of drugs.

844 A pregnant woman is generally treated with great consideration. For the first confinement it is customary for her to return to her mother's group. Among the *Hei-//om* the labour is conducted in the camp. Among the more primitive Kalahari Bushmen the woman leaves the camp as soon as the first symptoms appear and is attended to by her mother or some other old woman underneath a tree some distance away. Tufts of grass are uprooted and placed upside down on the tree as a warning to men that a labour is in progress. The mother returns to the camp immediately after the birth of the child and for a week or more subsequently is relieved of such duties as gathering wood and veldkos, fetching water, etc.

846 In the event of a mother dying during childbirth the infant is reared by the grandmother or by some friend who desires a child. When it cannot be disposed of in this manner

848 it is buried alive with the mother. Illegitimate births are not common among the primitive communities. When they do occur the children are usually put to death. Pregnancies

165 follow in rapid succession during the course of married life
847 but owing to the high mortality among infants caused by the strenuous conditions of life very few children survive. Further, among the Bushmen of the Kalahari child murder is practised. Children are suckled until they are able to walk well. If a new child is born while the last one is still on the breast it is buried alive in the nearest burrow or in a hole made for the purpose by the old woman who conducted the labour. When twins are born one is invariably killed.

[845] It is for these reasons that it is rare to find families of five
[162] or more children in the Kalahari. On an average only two or three children survive infancy and early childhood.

Among the Bushmen of the Oschimpoloveld and Ovamboland larger families are met with. Brother and sister avoidance [593] is met with in some but not in all tribes. There is no special ceremony in connection with the naming of children. Among

553 the *Hei-//om* each child is generally given three names,
[551] namely a first name, a second name and a surname. Names are not given by the parents. The first name may be given by the father's mother and the second name by the

193 a or ɤ or a nasalization of the vowel, as [kōŋ] "grandfather",
 [196] ŋk'a "brother", ɔpwoŋ "son", ŋk'en "child's father-in-law".

[601] These endings are particularly interesting, as otherwise the
 !xam language has no signs of gender. Perhaps they show that
 in some former stage this was a language with genders, just as
 English still shows its old division into genders in its names for
 classes of people.

601 On the use of tata a Bushman said: "We say ibo, we say i oa,
 [192] but the children who are lately there say tata; they should say
 ibo. The habit of saying tata comes from the Boers."

193 ɔpwa is the !xam diminutive; in allied dialects it denotes
 196 "child", which in !xam is [kwā]. That ɔpoŋ "son" and ɔpwaŋ
 601 "daughter" are derivatives is clear. I think that ɔpwaŋ-!hi
 "father-in-law" is derived from ɔpwa "child" and !haŋ "to
 marry", the man whose child one marries. ɔpwaŋtente would be
 the feminine form thereof. !ha "husband", "wife" is certainly
 derived from !haŋ.

The second, more unusual title for parents-in-law I cannot
 explain; [kwī] is "person", but I have no example of any other
 use of ŋk'a, except that it seems part of the terms ŋk'en and
 ŋk'aiti, applied to the parents of a son- or daughter-in-law, or of
 a brother- or sister-in-law.

● 606 On a man's behaviour to his parents-in-law we have the
 following note: "They (the sons-in-law) do not talk to their
 mother-in-law in haste, for they are silent. Their father-in-law
 is the one with whom they talk. He (the son-in-law) acts like
 this, at another time he does not talk to his father-in-law; he
 merely talks to his wife, his wife is the one who talks to her
 father. He also acts like this to his mother-in-law, he speaks
 with her. He speaks with her, he is silent."

[538] This looks as if there are occasions on which one or other of
 the wife's parents may be addressed, and others when they may
 not. I have noticed in their stories of the Mantis, that his
 adopted daughter's husband does not often address the Mantis
 directly, but says to his own son, "Tell Grandfather so-and-so,"
 which the child does. However, in one story the two men speak
 directly to each other.

196 ŋk'a, ŋkaxai "brother", "sister", may be derived from ŋk'a
 601 "like", "to be like". In Nama ŋk'ab means "the same". The
 adjective [kəri] simply means "big".

196 woman calls her brothers-in-law by words formed from this root,
601 but not her sisters-in-law; whereas a man does the opposite. The result is, that anyone calling a connexion *tah̄* is called *tah̄* by that person. Other connexions are called *twi*, a word which seems to mean "to tie", "to net", as *twishiba* "a riempi net", or "string bag". A woman calls both parents-in-law and son- and daughter-in-law *twi*, but a man calls his wife's parents simply "father" and "mother". I think he calls his son- and daughter-in-law *twi*, but have no clear examples.

591 Women are said to leave their own home on marriage, and to be taken to the husband's home. But in a few months, when the wife has settled down, it is customary for the young couple to return to her parents' home and stay there till the first child is about a year old, so that the girl may have her mother's help and advice. Sometimes the son-in-law settles altogether with his wife's people, but not always. In fact, the Naron all say that a man must settle at his father's place, though they do not always do so. This does not explain why a man calls his wife's parents "father" and "mother".

• 606 A man is supposed not to speak to his mother-in-law, nor a woman to her father-in-law. Of the former I had personal evidence: my Bushman kitchen boy would not enter a room in which his mother-in-law happened to be. As to not speaking, I think that means more—not sitting near, not consorting with a person, rather than never addressing him. A Naron granny gave me a vivid description of the family settling the name of a new-born child. The relations present all quarrel over it: the father says, he wants the little girl called after one of his people, but the mother's mother tells him that is not at all necessary, the baby is to be named after her. This shows that speech between the two is not absolutely forbidden.

183 There is a prohibition against a grown-up brother and sister
593 speaking or sitting together,—but here, too, the sitting, not the speaking, is the important part. I have heard a fully grown brother and sister addressing each other, while passing at a good distance. This rule explains why the relationship between a man and his brother's child is nearer than that with his sister's child, the former being called *uku* "son", the latter *tah̄*, a more distant term; whereas a woman calls her sister's son "son", her brother's son *tah̄*.

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vour it. Thus, according to our observations, a !Kung band gets on an average 224 only about fifteen to eighteen large animals in a usual year.

The meat of the large game animals does not belong to the hunters to do with as they choose. However, they always have the prerogative of eating the liver at the site of the kill and, if their hunger is not satisfied, they may eat more. The bulk of the meat is then carried to the band, where it is distributed among the members according to a system. The meat belongs to the owner of the first arrow that penetrates the animal so that it stays in. He has the responsibility of making the first distribution.

Anyone in the band may be the owner of the arrow. A hunter carries 224 arrows he acquires in three different ways. Each man has his own that he 411 makes himself, shaping the points with some little distinction so that he 422 will know them from the arrows of other men. In addition he carries 426 arrows that have been given or lent to him. When an arrow is given to him, 431 he is the owner as much as if he had made it himself, but if he uses that 571 arrow he must make a special gift of meat to the donor. When he uses an arrow that is loaned to him, he merely shoots for the person who lent it and who remains the owner of the arrow. !Kung society makes a great deal of giving and lending arrows. Women and old men, as well as men in their hunting prime, receive arrows as gifts and may give them or lend them to a hunter, asking him to shoot for them. A hunter cannot refuse an arrow—[576] as a person cannot refuse any gift—without offending the giver. He accepts the arrow and with it an obligation, but he gives or lends arrows in return and involves others in obligation to him. Hunters choose to use one or another of their arrows, with the result that the responsibility of distributing the meat, with its advantages and obligations, is shared by members of the band as is the meat itself.

In the first distribution the whole animal is divided among a few 224 persons, who receive whole sections on the bone, unless the animal is so large that the meat has to be cut off in strips to be carried. The first of these persons are the hunters, each of whom gets a fore- or hindquarter or the equivalent. The giver of the arrow (if the arrow was not made by the owner himself) receives a generous portion. The owner of the arrow, who may be one of the hunters, or anybody, keeps the rest.

In the second distribution, the several persons who got meat in the 224 first distribution cut up their shares and distribute them further. The 602 amounts depend on the number of persons involved, but should be as much as the giver can manage. In the second distribution, close kinship is the factor that sets the pattern of giving. A man's first obligation at this point [606] is to his wife's parents. He must give to them the best he has in as generous [593] portions as he can while still fulfilling other primary obligations, which are to his own parents, his spouse, and offspring. He keeps a portion for himself at this time and from it would give to his siblings, to his wife's siblings, if

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mountains in the west of Great Namaqualand.¹ Most of the Bushmen, however, now live in flat country, where such natural shelters are denied them. Wherever they stay for more than a couple of days, crude bush huts are put up by the women. These are usually erected within walking distance of a waterhole, about an hour or two away. The people never live at the water itself, for fear of frightening away the game, which is most easily shot or trapped when coming to drink. [342] [361] [462] [312] [224]

Among the Heikum, according to Fourie, "When it becomes necessary to desert an old camp and establish a new one the site for the latter is selected by the chief, who deposits his household and other effects on the place on which his own hut is to be erected. After the other members have done likewise he proceeds to light a new fire by means of firesticks. Brands from the fire of the old werft may not be used for this purpose. From the fire kindled by him each family then lights its own, after which the women may begin with the building of the huts." [361] [622] [342] [372]

There seems to be as a rule no fixed form of settlement. All the families drinking at one waterhole may live in one group, or there may be several lots of huts scattered about in different directions. Among the Cape Bushmen, for example, one might find three or four huts standing together, or several huts dotted about within a radius of a few miles from the water, and the same appears to be true of the Naron.² [361]

Among the Heikum, however, the camp is said to be laid out on a definite plan.³ As a rule all the members of the band live in a common encampment or "werft" (*//gaus*). The huts of the married families are placed at a certain interval apart, and arranged in the form of an irregular circle. At or near the middle of the camp is situated a large tree, known as the */heis*. The hut of the chief (*gei-khoib*) is always placed in the east, facing, but at some distance away from, the others. The brother of the *gei-khoib* live immediately to his left on the south side of the *//gaus*, and beyond them are placed the other married families of the community. The right or north side of the *//gaus* is reserved entirely for visiting sisters of the *gei-khoib* and their families, while any of his married daughters who may be visiting him erects her hut directly opposite to his at the furthest extremity of the camp. [184] [606]

¹ Trunk, "Buschleute der Namib," 166.

² "Bushmen of S.W. Africa," 86.

³ D. F. Bleek, *The Men and his Friends*, p. viii; *idem*, *The Naron*, 4.

⁴ Fourie, "Customs of the Hei-//om Bushmen," 30-3; *idem*, "Bushmen of S.W. Africa," 86.

- ³⁶¹ [606] exists among the *Hei-//om* in common with other Bushman tribes.
 [882] Within the circle of huts towards the south is the hut of the adolescent young girls, and towards the north that of the adolescent young men; mature marriageable young women occupy huts next to those of their parents in the circle. Old widows and widowers, as also [589] visitors from any neighbouring group, live outside the circle of married people. The dancing place is to the west within the circle.
 "The large tree (*/heis*) in or near the centre of the *//gaus* is reserved ³⁶¹ as a meeting place for men for ceremonial and other purposes. Women ⁵⁶² are entirely forbidden to approach it or to join the men when gathered underneath it. To this, however, there is one exception, namely, [622] the wife (*gei-khoib*) of the *gei-khoib* may go to it to obtain fire for kindling the principal fire (*/ou-!ais*) or for other menial purposes when required by her husband. With the exception of the chief nobody is permitted to live in close proximity to this */heis*. Under [372] it is made the first fire (*/hei-!ais*) on the establishment of a new [224] *//gaus* and underneath it is deposited, for distribution, all meat killed in the chase."¹

- Fourie speaks of this camp arrangement as being present among ¹¹⁴ all the Bushmen in the northern parts of South-West Africa,² but the ³⁶¹ only confirmation for this statement is given by Vedder, who just hints at a similar arrangement of the camp among the Kung. "Where several families live together," he says, "the huts are ranged in a circle, the head of the group ("Dorfsälteste") living in the east."³
 Each family within the group has its own hut. Where the families ⁵⁹² are polygynous, the wives may live together in the same hut if they [595] get on well; otherwise each will build herself a separate hut. Children sleep with their parents until strong enough to go about by themselves. The bigger boys and young bachelors sometimes share [882] a hut together, but generally they sleep out in the open under a tree, and only in very wet weather will their mothers in co-operation build them a hut. Unmarried girls too old to sleep with their parents also share a separate hut. An old widower may live alone, or with [589] a boy; a widow and her little children, where they do not live alone, are generally quartered with the girls.⁴

- ³⁴² The huts themselves (Plate VI) are somewhat crude, consisting as a rule merely of a semicircular shelter of branches planted into

¹ Fourie, "Customs of the *Hei-//om* Bushmen," 32.² "Bushmen of S.W. Africa," 86.³ "Grammatik der *!Ku-Buschmanns*prache," 6.⁴ D. F. Bleek, *The Naron*, 4-5; Fourie, "Customs of the *Hei-//om* Bushmen," 33; Kaufmann, "Die Auln," 138.

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only to the treatment of women and their paramours; nothing is said of the wife's remedies when her husband is unfaithful. ¹¹⁴ 684

Besides this sexual relation between husband and wife, there is also the economic relation. The two share the same hut, and take their meals in common. It is the duty of the wife to build the hut, to provide the vegetable food, the firewood and water, and to cook the meals; while it is the duty of the husband to provide game for himself and his wife, to make her clothes and certain of her utensils. The economic burden of the woman has led some writers to depreciate her status, but on the whole it would seem that the women are the companions of their husbands, not their servants, and will often take their own way, in spite of the man's wishes. The position of the wife within the household is, in fact, hardly inferior to that of her husband, who, it is said, is often enough henpecked by her! ⁵⁸¹ 264 242 562 593

In addition to establishing this special relationship between husband and wife, marriage leads also to the formation of further special relationships, especially with the parents-in-law. After marriage, as we have seen, the young couple may remain for some time with the wife's parents before finally taking up their residence in the husband's group. Among the Kung and the neighbouring tribes to the east the husband has during this period of temporary matrilocal residence to hunt for his parents-in-law and to supply them in this way with animal food. If he neglects to do this, says Vedder, his wife may be taken away from him.⁸ We thus get a special economic relationship between a man and his wife's parents, based directly upon the fact of his marriage. Probably something similar exists among the other Bushman tribes having temporary matrilocal residence, but no concrete information is available about them in this connection. ⁵⁹¹ 606 583

Among almost all the Bushmen, moreover, marriage further creates a special form of etiquette between a man and his parents-in-law, and in some cases between a woman and her husband's parents. Thus among the Kung the husband has to avoid his mother-in-law, the wife apparently also her father-in-law. The wife's parents do not enter the hut of the young couple, nor again may the husband enter their hut. The game which he kills for his father-in-law he lays down in front of the latter's hut.⁹ Similarly among the Naron a man is not ⁶⁰⁶

⁸ Kaufmann, op. cit., 157; Chapman, op. cit., i, 291; Lebzelter, op. cit., 14. For an unsympathetic account of the wife's status, cf. Hahn, "Die Buschmänner," 122.

⁹ Vedder, op. cit., 8; Chapman, op. cit., i, 258.

¹⁰ Vedder, loc. cit.; Chapman, loc. cit.; D. F. Bleek, "Bushman Terms of Relationship," 63.

606 supposed to speak to his wife's mother, nor a woman to her husband's father. Of the former Miss Bleek had personal evidence, since her [114] Bushman kitchen boy would not enter a room in which his mother-in-law happened to be. Actually it seems that sitting near or consorting together is avoided, rather than the actual addressing of the person concerned.¹ So, too, among the Auen a man avoids the company of his mother-in-law and does not sit together with her. If he approaches a fire in order to sit there, she gets up and goes away; if he wants to speak to her, he must do so from a distance.² Among the Heikum, again, as we have seen, a young couple who are visiting the wife's parents will erect their hut on the opposite side of the camp, so that the husband may not be too near his parents-in-law. He neither looks at nor speaks to his wife's mother, nor will he mention her name or enter her hut even in case of sickness or during her absence. When she is away and he wishes to speak to anybody in her hut, he will keep at a distance and depart as soon as he sees her approaching. They never refer to each other by name, but always as "my son-in-law" or "my mother-in-law". The son-in-law also does not associate with his father-in-law, but avoids him in the same way. Should they meet accidentally, they may exchange greetings, but no general conversation will take place, nor will they look each other in the face.³ A similar avoidance of the parents-in-law among the Cape Bushmen is indicated in one of the texts obtained by Bleek and Lloyd, but no details are given.⁴ [60]

Dissolution of Marriage

586 The duration of married life varies. Among the Naron, says Miss Bleek, "One sees couples who have grown old together, on the other hand one hears of cases of desertion on either side. If there are no children, no one worries about it. If there are youngsters, the relations try to bring the parents to reason." Where separation does take place, the children belong to the father; an unweaned child must go with the mother, but the father can claim it later if he likes. [587] People who have separated are not ostracized, but both parties generally marry again.⁵ No indication is given of the grounds for separation. Among the Auen divorce is rare, and only takes place

¹ D. F. Bleek, op. cit., 64; *idem*, *Naron*, 32.

² Kaufmann, op. cit., 116.

³ Fourie, "Bushmen of S.W. Africa," 23-4.

⁴ Quoted in D. F. Bleek, "Bushman Terms of Relationship," 18.

⁵ *Naron*, 34.